

---

CONNECTICUT  
EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE;  
AND  
*RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.*

---

VOL. V.]

NOVEMBER, 1812.

[NO. 11.

---

*An Historical View of the First  
Planters of New-England.*

NO. XIV.

(Continued from p. 371.

REV. MR. WILSON.

M R. JOHN WILSON the first pastor of the church in Boston, was born at Windsor, on the Thames, in the year 1588. He was a son of the Rev. William Wilson, a prebendary of the church at Rochester. His parents, who descended from a very respectable ancestry, and sustained an exemplary Christian character, were very attentive to the education of this son. They took pains to impress his mind with an early abhorrence of all vice, especially, falsehood. After receiving the rudiments of his education under their immediate inspection, he spent four years in the celebrated Eaton School. At that school, he delivered a latin oration in the presence of the

French Ambassador, the Duke of Biron, from whom he received a particular commendation and reward. In his fifteenth year, he was removed to the University, and became a member of King's College, Cambridge. After completing the regular course of studies, he was elected a Fellow of the college. During his continuance in the fellowship, he became acquainted, in a very providential manner, with the writings and preaching of several pious puritan divines, whose instructions were the means of engaging his mind to a very serious attention to divine things. By the habits of his education, he had imbibed a great antipathy to all who were denominated *puritans*. But in the distresses of his soul, he found himself irresistibly inclined to seek for instruction to those who had been the subjects of his aversion. He soon found his moral state to be that of a lost sinner, and that he was dependent on sovereign mercy for an escape

VOL. V. NO. 11.

Ccc

from everlasting death. While he continued to improve every opportunity of attending the ministrations of evangelical preachers ; by the advice of the excellent Dr. Ames, he connected himself with a number of serious persons in the University, who held private meetings for prayer, fasting, and religious conference. By the blessing of God upon these means, he was brought to an acquaintance with his own heart, to a knowledge of divine truth, and, apparently, to a perpetual union with the divine Saviour.

Being thus brought to an estimation of the truths of religion as of the first importance, Mr. Wilson proceeded to a very careful consideration of the great subjects of controversy between the advocates of the religious establishment and the non-conformists. This was about the time that Mr. Robinson and his people removed to Holland, when the debates between the contending parties were, perhaps, at their height. After a laborious, prayerful, and conscientious attention to this subject, Mr. Wilson concluded it to be his duty, though with the prospect of the greatest temporal sacrifices, to refuse to comply with many of the prescribed ceremonies of the established church. A great part of the regulations of the University were appointed by ecclesiastical authority, and were considered by the non-conformists as unscriptural and improper impositions. By a non-compliance with these regulations, Mr. Wilson soon brought upon him the notice and censures of authority. His father and oth-

ers used great exertions to persuade him to conform ; but believing himself called in the holy providence of God to raise his testimony against those unscriptural impositions, he steadily refused. He was therefore obliged to leave the University.

His father finding that he had embraced the sentiments of the puritans, contrary to his former intentions, wished him not to engage in the work of the ministry ; but now desired him to enter one of the Inns of court, to pursue the study of the law. Wishing to manifest a filial obedience in every thing which was not forbidden by a paramount duty to God, though his heart was wholly set upon the glorious ministry of reconciliation, he complied, and engaged in the study. But that God to whom he had dedicated his life did not forsake him. In the Inns of court, he fell into an acquaintance with several young gentlemen who were seriously inclined, with whom he attended on the preaching of evangelical ministers, and was enabled to maintain a life of religion. After three years spent in the study of the law, he was admitted to the higher honors of the University ; after which, by the consent of his father, he was soon authorized to be a preacher of the gospel. This work he pursued, with laborious study, with an ardent zeal for Christ, and for the salvation of souls. Previous to his commencing a preacher of the gospel, he made a private resolution, " That if the Lord would grant him a liberty of conscience, with purity of worship, he would be content, yea

thankful, though it were at the furthermost end of the world." He had not been long a preacher, before he was solemnly ordained as a minister of Christ. Still he had no particular charge. He had frequent and pressing invitations to settle in particular places, but the precarious situation of all ministers who were accused of non-conformity, induced him to decline several advantageous offers. At length, however, on receiving an earnest invitation from the people of Sudbury, he accepted of their call and was installed their pastor. During the short period of his labors in this place, his ministry was attended with an eminent blessing of God. Many that were openly vicious and erroneous, were brought to the love and obedience of truth. He pursued his work with diligence and constancy, as if knowing that it must be short, that he might do something for God.

In this quiet retreat, Mr. Wilson could not be permitted to rest. The sticklers for conformity, learning his steady perseverance in omitting the prescribed ceremonies, fearing the effect of his weight of character, called him before the ecclesiastical courts, where he was censured, and suspended from the ministerial office. By the interposition of friends of high station and influence, the suspension was, at length, removed. But as he still pursued his former course, he was constantly liable to be apprehended, and subjected to fines, forfeitures, and perpetual imprisonment. The only alternatives now presented him were, a vio-

lation of what he deemed the plainest dictates of duty, a submission to unrelenting persecution, or a voluntary exile from his native country. He chose the latter. The plan of a colony for the establishment of the pure religion of the gospel being now projected, Mr. Wilson cordially engaged in the important design. With the large company that established the Massachusetts colony, he united his labors and hopes, and came to America in the year 1630. The first church gathered by the company was the one at Charlestown, of which Mr. Wilson was the minister. The congregation included the two settlements at Charlestown and Boston. The year following, a separate church was organized at Boston, of which Mr. Wilson became the pastor.

In the spring of 1631, Mr. Wilson sailed to England, and after an absence of a year, returned to New-England with his family. His affectionate people at Sudbury were very desirous to have him still conclude to spend his days with them. His near connections used every exertion to dissuade him from a return to the American wilderness. But his heart was too much set on the great work of rearing colonies and churches for the honor of the Redeemer, to be diverted from his design. On his return he was attended by a number of pious and worthy planters. A few years after, he again visited his native country, to receive a valuable legacy which had been left him by a deceased brother. On the voyage, the ship became very leaky, and there was every

prospect that all must be lost. A day of fasting and prayer was kept on board, on account of the danger, and, in the time of the exercise, the leak was discovered and closed. On his return to New-England Mr. Wilson was accompanied with a large number of settlers, many of whom were persons of character and distinction.

The Antinomian errors which were introduced by Mrs. Hutchinson and others, which greatly affected the church in Boston, gave Mr. Wilson the deepest concern. Temperate and firm, he bore a uniform testimony for the truth of the gospel, and with every indication of tenderness and love, he used unwearyed efforts to reclaim the erroneous, and to confirm others in the truth. Those errors, by the particular circumstances with which they were inculcated, were, for a season, highly popular, and many worthy men were drawn into the snare. Mr. Wilson had long been used to leave all consequences with divine providence, when called to witness for truth, and now, pursuing the plain and direct course, he was a most eminent instrument of preserving the churches from convulsion and ruin. He was one of the most active and influential members of the venerable Synod of 1637, which suppressed those dangerous errors.

In the war of the Pequod Indians, in 1637, a chaplain for the Massachusetts troops being designated by lot, Mr. Wilson was called to the service. Being eminently, a man of prayer, the soldiers viewed him as a host in the day of battle. Du-

ring the greater part of his ministry at Boston, Mr. Wilson was favored with a colleague who was teacher of the church. This place was held twenty years by Mr. Cotton, and ten years by Mr. Norton. As pastor of the church, Mr. Wilson was peculiarly laborious, in frequent preaching, in exhortation, visiting, and domestic instruction; keeping a constant and affectionate attention to the spiritual interests of his people. He also spent much time in the neighboring towns, generally attending their weekly lectures. The whole colony enjoyed the benefit of his pious zeal, his eminent acquaintance with divine truth, his patient example, and his unremitting prayers. In these labors of faith and love, he continued to a late period of life. Having survived the greater part of his cotemporaries, and the most of the first settlers of the country, he died in 1667, in the seventy-ninth year of his age.

The life of this venerable man, was eminently devoted to the service of his Lord. After devoting himself to the duties of religion and the work of the ministry, he ever appeared to feel that he was not his own. He had engaged for Christ, and wherever he directed his way, it was always his desire to pursue the course, undeterred by any obstacles which might resist, or any burden which he might be called to bear.—No one of the New-England fathers was more sincerely engaged for the interests of true religion in the towns and churches of the colonies, than Mr. Wilson. To the promotion of

this great object, his eminent talents, his extensive learning, his unwearied exertions, were always devoted. His mind was as steady in adversity as in prosperity, strengthened by the conscious integrity of his own intentions, with a uniform reliance on the perfect wisdom of all the appointments of God, he rejoiced to labor or to suffer for him.—He was favored with a valuable property, and used it as a faithful steward of God. Having devoted his life to rear an infant colony and church for the honor of his Redeemer, his property, when needed for the same object, could not be withheld. In the distresses of the first winter, when the colony had to contend with the horrors of famine, while he labored to comfort the desponding with a recollection of the sufferings and deliverances of the people of God, in every period of the church, his house was open to the needy, administering relief, to the last portion it contained, and the last which could be procured. On every call for the exercise of liberality, whether for the common welfare or the relief of the destitute, he was a most faithful example to his flock, by devising liberal things. He possessed an uncommon degree of the benevolence of the gospel. His love to God and his fellow-men glowed with an inextinguishable ardor. The former was evinced by a life of sufferings and labor, while his ardent love to men appeared in a fervent zeal for their immortal interests, in unwearied exertions to alleviate the evils and increase the blessings of human society. He exhibited an

example of ever active benevolence, of an abhorrence of error and vice, of a composure of mind, and, in all the changes of life, a disposition uniformly cheerful. Not the poor only, but all characters received him as their friend.—Mr. Wilson exhibited some of the highest exercises of faith. In times of concern, he always made the Lord his helper, he sought his assistance with a humble persevering importunity, and he often gained the most remarkable confidence in the divine interposition. Several instances are mentioned of him, in which after a most humble and earnest wrestling in prayer to God, he obtained an assurance that the object of his desire would be granted, which never failed till his hope was joyfully realized. This venerable saint lived eminently near to God. His life was a life of prayer. His whole demeanor manifested a uniform and solemn sense of the divine presence. His beloved Saviour was always his companion, his support, and his fear. His life exhibited a strong example of humility, self-denial, and those high attainments in virtue, which adorn some of the children of Emmanuel. He ever felt himself journeying to the heavenly state, and the impression regulated the whole tenor of his life.—His death was such as might be expected from such a life. In his last sickness, he took a most affectionate farewell of his numerous Christian friends, assuring them that the faithful servants of Christ need not fear that he would forsake them in the last trying conflict. He refused to hear any com-

mendations of himself, declaring that he had ever been an unprofitable servant : adding, "But I must say, the Lord be merciful to me a sinner, let thy tender mercies come unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation according to thy word." He pronounced his tenderest blessing upon his near friends, particularly upon his children, which in the faithful providence of God, was singularly fulfilled. He then made a most affectionate prayer for them, and slept in peace. Mr. Mather of Dorchester, the ancestor of the venerable family of that name, preached at his funeral, from the passage in the prophet, *Your fathers, where are they ? and the prophets, do they live for ever ?* The venerable Dr. Ames, so eminent for his learning and piety, observed, "If he could have his option of the best condition that he could propose to himself, on this side heaven, it would be that he might be the teacher of a congregational church of which Mr. Wilson should be the pastor."

#### REV. MR. SHEPARD.

Mr Thomas Shepard is distinguished among the New England fathers, by an uncommon ardor of piety ; by a great zeal for God and his holy truth ; by a great success in the work of the ministry, and by his valuable writings, which have been an eminent security to our churches, and a great defence to the cause of truth. He was born near Northampton, Nov. 5th, 1605. A day rendered memorable in the annals of the British

nation by the discovery of the well known Powder-plot. He was the youngest son of his father, by whose death, he was left an orphan in early life. His eldest brother took the care of his education, and performed for him the duties of a father. At the age of fifteen, he was admitted a member of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. While he advanced in the paths of science with an uncommon rapidity for his years, he experienced the frequent and powerful strivings of the divine Spirit upon his conscience. The preaching of some pious ministers at the University produced in his mind powerful convictions of his sin and danger. Earnestly engaged in the pursuit of his studies, these convictions declined, and nearly subsided. The faithful discourse of a pious fellow-student again roused him to a sense of his sins, that, on an examination of divine truth, he found himself in a lost, perishing state. He frequented religious company, from which he derived much salutary instruction. At length, the preaching of Dr. Preston which was very solemn and pungent, who went to reside at the college during Mr. Shepard's pupillage, was made effectual, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, as he believed, of bringing his soul to the mercy-seat of the divine Saviour. In a subsequent period of life, he writes concerning the divine mercies which he had experienced, "The Lord is the God that sent Dr. Preston and Mr. Goodwin to call me. The words of the first, in the first sermon I heard from him, and divers others near that time, did open my heart, and convince me

of my unbelief, and my total emptiness of all, and enmity against all good.—God, by him, showed me the worth of Christ, and made my soul satisfied with him, and cleave to him, because God had made him righteousness, and hence also revealed his free justification, and gave me support and rest in his promises.” About the time of the important change in the exercises of his mind, when he was about nineteen years of age, he resolved to devote a certain season, on the evening of every day, to a careful meditation on divine things. His object was to learn divine truth, to get an acquaintance with his own heart, and to seek the saving mercy of Christ. In these seasons of meditation, he received his first special comforts in God.

After receiving the degree of Master of Arts, he left the University and began to preach the gospel. Though quite young, his preaching possessed a gravity of manner, and an energy of expression, which procured much attention and high respect. At the same time, he exhibited such an ardent zeal for Christ, and for the salvation of immortal souls, in his preaching and all his conduct, as caused his labors to be attended with great success. The great desire of his heart was that his fellow-sinners might enjoy the excellency of divine grace.

A certain charitable gentleman in Essex, proposing to establish a weekly lecture, committed the management of it to a number of pious ministers, who offered the service to Mr. Shepard. As they were attending one of their stated monthly

fasts, while engaged in prayer for divine direction respecting the disposition of their lecture, an earnest application from a destitute people, soon brought them to a decision.—The lecture was fixed at Coln, for three years, where Mr. Shepard was employed to the great approbation and benefit of the people. He was very laborious in that and the neighboring towns, and was made eminently instrumental in impressing the reality and excellency of divine truth. Many were so attached to him, viewing him as the instrument of their saving conversion, that, for the benefit of his ministry, they attended him to the wilderness of America.—Though the lecture was renewed, after three years, at the earnest desire of the people, he continued to reside and labor at Coln. At his request, the lecture was established in his native town, and given do his intimate friend, Mr. Stone.

Though employed in an obscure part of his Lord’s vineyard, devoted, exclusively, to his service, the fidelity and success of his ministry were too great to be unnoticed by the iron rage of persecution. He was silenced by Bishop Laud, for no other fault than his non-conformity. He was no schismatic or partisan; yet he was a puritan, and his influence must be suppressed. For fear of further sufferings, he was obliged to live some time in concealment. The vigilant zeal of the pursuivants made it necessary that his retreat should often be changed, or he must have fallen into their hands.

Having an invitation to preach

in Yorkshire, he travelled to that distant county, hoping to be permitted to minister for his Lord without molestation. After laboring for a season, with the most encouraging prospects, he again felt the arm of ecclesiastical power, and though he made another removal, to the county of Northumberland, he was prohibited from any further exercise of his ministry. He must now renounce the service of the ministry of reconciliation, or seek a field of labor in some country not his own. He could not hesitate which course to pursue.

The removal of Mr. Cotton, Mr. Hooker, and others, to New-England, for whose example he must have the highest respect, and to whom he was attached by the strongest ties of Christian friendship, fixed his determination to engage in the same arduous service. Mr. Shepard, and Mr. Norton, who was afterwards the successor of Mr. Cotton at Boston, went to Yarmouth to embark for New-England, near the end of the year 1634. Being soon overtaken with a violent storm, in which the prayer and faith of the passengers was considered the means of their preservation when their loss appeared inevitable, they were compelled to return and wait till the next season. They were kept in the most careful concealment during their stay, to avoid the vigilance of their pursuers. Mr. Shepard lost his eldest son at Yarmouth, but he could not appear at the funeral. In October, 1635, Mr. Shepard, with several worthy ministers, and three or four hundred passengers, arrived at Boston.

Mr. Hooker and his people were generally removing from Cambridge to Hartford. This made a convenient opening, when considerable improvements had been made, which were very gladly purchased and occupied by Mr. Shepard and his friends. In the February following, on a day of public fasting and prayer, in presence of a great concourse of people, they organized a church at Cambridge, and Mr. Shepard was set apart to the pastoral charge. He now rejoiced in an opportunity to be engaged, without interruption, in the great and good work which commanded all the affections of his heart. Though indefatigable in his labors he pursued no other object than the inculcation of the doctrines of the gospel, the vindication of its truths, and the salvation of sinners. He well understood the error of the antinomian sentiments which prevailed considerably in the colony, soon after his arrival, and was most active and successful in counteracting their baneful effects.

The colony having determined on founding a College, the faithful and judicious ministry of Mr. Shepard, was the principal inducement to establish it at Cambridge. He was considered a most useful model for imitation in the sacred calling, as well as eminently successful in detecting false religion, and leading enquirers in the way of the truth.

In his own and in the neighboring towns, Mr. Shepard was very laborious, and the zeal and solemnity of his preaching, always procured him attention.

He preached much, attended many lectures, and omitted no favorable opportunity to testify for Christ. His ministry was attended with great success. This we should expect.— Though God be a holy sovereign, and send the blessings of his grace in such a way as he sees fit, yet, seldom or never, do we find faithful, humble, persevering labors, unattended with his blessing. The same Holy Spirit which accompanied the ministry of Mr. Shepard in his native country, wherever he was called to labor, did not forsake him in the deserts of America. As he was successful in awakening the thoughtless and reclaiming the vicious, he was eminently useful in leading inquirers in the way of truth, in resolving the doubts and soothing the concern of the desponding Christian.

This shining light was extinguished in its meridian splendor. Returning from an ecclesiastical council at Rowley, he was suddenly taken with a quinsy, which, in a few days terminated his life, Aug. 1649, in the 44th year of his age. A little before his departure, he observed to his friends around him, "Oh love the Lord Jesus, the little part that I have in him is my great comfort, and all my hope." He left three sons, who became eminent ministers in the colony.

The writings of Mr. Shepard were of great benefit to the cause of truth, after the testimony of his voice had ceased to be heard. His most elaborate work was a treatise on the Sabbath. The morality of the Lord's day began to be called in

question in England, by many of the Antinomians and some others. In this treatise, he vindicated the perpetual obligation of the fourth commandment, the morality and holiness of the Christian Sabbath, in a most lucid and unanswerable manner.—In another work, which he published, he maintained, with much ability, the propriety of separating from the ecclesiastical establishment of England, and vindicated the order of the New-England churches as most conformable to the primitive pattern.—In a practical work, entitled "The Sound Believer," designed to distinguish true religion from false, which has been much read, he observes in the preface, "I considered my weak body, and my short time of sojourning here, and that I shall not speak long to children, friends, or God's precious people. I have been, therefore, willing to leave some part of God's precious truth on record, that it might speak, (Oh that it might be to the heart,) when I shall not be."

His largest and perhaps most useful publication, was an elaborate performance, to illustrate and apply the parable of the ten virgins. A principal object in this work is to point out the corruptions and dangers of churches. It consisted of a series of sermons delivered at his weekly lecture, from 1636, to 1640. It was published in a folio volume, with high commendations, after his death. This work is much improved in that great light and guide of the American church, President Edward's Treatise on Religious Affections.

A few extracts from Mr. Shepard's private writings will not be unacceptable. " April 10. I had many thoughts, which came in to press me to give up myself to Christ Jesus. So I gave myself to him. First, I acknowledged all I was, or had, was his own. Secondly, I resigned not only my own goods and estate, but my child, my wife, my church, and myself to the Lord ; out of love, as being the best and dearest things which I have. July 10. 1641. On the evening of this day, before the sacrament, I saw it my duty to sequester myself from all other things, for the Lord, the next day. And now I saw my blessedness did not lie in receiving of good and comfort from God, but in holding forth the glory of God, and his virtues. For it is, I saw, an amazing, glorious object, to see God in the creature ; God speak, God act, the Deity not being the creature, but filling it, shining through it, to be covered with God as with a cloud. Aug. 15. I saw, on the Sabbath, four evils which attended me in my ministry. First, discouragement and shame from a sense of the meanness of what I have provided in private meditations. Secondly, carelessness possesses me. Thirdly, infirmities and weakness, as want of light, want of life, want of a spirit of power to deliver what I am affected with, for Christ. Fourthly, want of success. I saw these, and that I was to be humbled for them. Dec. 1. A small thing troubled me. I had a spirit soon touched and provoked. I saw that the Lord let sin and Satan prevail there, that I might see my

sin, and be more humbled by it, and so get strength against it. Nov. 3. On a Fast-day at night, in preparation for the duty, I saw sin as my greatest evil. I was vile, He only was good whom my sin did cross.—On the end of the fast, I went unto God, I rested upon him as sufficient ; I waited on him as efficient ; and said, Now, Lord, do for thy churches and help in mercy. April 4. Preparing for a Fast.—May not I be the cause of the church's sorrows, which are renewed upon us ? *These sheep, what have they done?* 1. My heart has been long lying out from the Lord. He sent a terrible storm at sea, to awaken me. Then, immediately took away my child, my first-born. Then the Lord took my dear wife from me. He then threatened blindness to my child. And this made God's will *afflicting, sweet to me, but much more, commanding and promising.* But Oh, how is my gold become dim. 2. The people committed to me. They are not pitied so much, nor prayed for, nor visited, as they ought to be. 3. The family ; I have not edified nor instructed, nor taken all occasions of speech with them. 4. The gospel I have preached, has not been seen in its glory, not believed, not affecting. 5. Not seeking to Christ for supply. My not lamenting the falls of professors, and the condition of the country.—I have now had a long sickness, as if the Lord would delight no more in me to use me. Oh my God, who shall be like to thee in pardoning and subduing mine iniquities ?" O.

[To be continued.]

*On the Foreknowledge of God.*

**T**HIS foreknowledge of God is so generally believed and acknowledged, that there is no occasion of saying much to prove that God did foreknow all things from eternity. It may suffice to adduce one argument in support of it, which may be drawn from the divine predictions. The apostle James infers from God's foretelling things, that he must have foreknown what he had foretold. And it must be universally granted, that if God can foretel future events, he must certainly know the future events, which he foretels with certainty. It is impossible to conceive that any being should infallibly foretel what he does not infallibly know. God foretold the coming of Christ, four thousand years before he appeared in the flesh. He foretold to Adam, immediately after he had involved himself and his posterity in sin and ruin, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." He foretold to Abraham, that "in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed." Peter on the day of Pentecost told the Jews, "that God had sworn with an oath to David, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Afterwards he said to those who had killed the prince of life, "Now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers; but these things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of *all the prophets* that Christ should suffer, he hath fulfilled. Yea, and all

the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." God foretold the time when, the place where, and the men by whom Christ should be crucified, together with some of the most extraordinary circumstances of his death. Now, God could not have infallibly foretold the great event of Christ's death, with all its circumstances, unless he had infallibly foreknown it; and he could not have infallibly foreknown it, unless he had infallibly foreknown all events from Adam to Christ. For if there had been among the many millions of intervening events, any which he did not foreknow, they might have prevented the death of Christ, and rendered his predictions false. God must have foreknown all the men from Adam to Christ, and all their volitions, and free, voluntary actions, in order to foreknow and foretel the coming, sufferings, and death of the Son of his love. And if he knew from eternity all things from Adam to Christ, there can be no question, whether he knew all things from Christ to this day; from this day to the end of time; and from the end of time to the boundless ages of eternity. Indeed, if God foreknew any thing from eternity, he must have foreknown all things from eternity. For, foreknowledge, in every degree of it, is an infallible evidence of divinity. Hence God proclaims himself to be divine, and superior to all other beings in the universe, because he foreknows all things, "I am God, and there is none else: I am God

and there is none like me : declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." Known unto God, and to him alone, are all future things from eternity.—Though there be complete and abundant evidence of the divine foreknowledge of all things, it is a very important question, how it was possible even for God himself to foreknow all things from eternity. This has been considered as a very difficult question. Some have said, that it cannot be answered. And some have answered it one way, and some another. Very few have denied the foreknowledge of God, though some have presumed to do it, for the sake of avoiding what they deemed the natural consequences of it. But those, who do not deny, that God foreknew all things from eternity, suppose there was some way, in which it was possible for him to possess this truly divine knowledge. And, perhaps, by a serious and critical enquiry, we may discover the way, and the only possible way, in which God could foreknow all things from eternity. Here, then, we may observe,

1. That God could not foreknow all things from eternity, by information. In the early days of eternity, he existed alone. There was no other being, created or uncreated, in the universe. Hence the prophet, with great propriety and emphasis, demands, "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord? or who, being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him

knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" Before the beginning of the world, there was no superior, nor inferior intelligence, who could give God any information respecting future things. So that God, could not foreknow future things in the way in which prophets and apostles have foreknown them ; that is, by inspiration or information. Nor,

2. Could God foreknow all things from eternity, by seeing any thing out of himself, which should be the cause of their future existence. Things that begin to exist, must have a previous cause of their existence. And unless God saw some cause of the existence of future things, it was absolutely impossible that he should have the least knowledge of their future existence. Though his understanding was infinite, yet he could not know that any thing in time to come would begin to exist without a cause. And he must have clearly known, that there was nothing without himself, that could be the cause of this, or any other world, or of any future event. The more clear, perfect and infallible God's essential attribute of knowledge was, the more clearly and certainly he must have known, that there could nothing exist in future, without a cause, and that there was nothing without himself, which could be a cause of any thing existing beside himself. He must certainly have known, that neither a heaven, nor an earth, neither an angel, nor a man, nor any other material or immaterial object, could in a future time exist, by any possible

cause, without himself. So that it was absolutely impossible that he should foreknow all things from eternity, by any cause, or evidence out of himself, for there was no cause or evidence of their existence out of himself, which he must have clearly and certainly known. Hence, instead of foreknowing all things, which have existed and will exist, he must have foreseen that nothing beside himself would ever exist, there being no cause of their existence out of himself. Besides,

3. God could not foreknow all things from eternity, merely by being God and possessed of all divine perfections. He might have been God, and possessed all the perfections of his nature, without any other existence besides himself. His existence did not depend upon any other existence. His power did not depend upon any other existence. His wisdom did not depend upon any other existence. His goodness did not depend upon any other existence. Nor did his knowledge of himself depend upon any other existence. There was no mutual and necessary connection between the existence of God and any other existence in the universe. He might, if he had pleased, existed from eternity to eternity, perfectly alone. It was, therefore, as impossible for God to foreknow all things, by seeing any cause in himself, as by seeing any cause out of himself, of their future existence. It is confidently said by some, that God must have necessarily known all things from eternity, merely by being God and knowing himself. But this

is sooner said than proved. For it appears, that there was no natural or necessary connection between God's existence, and the existence of any thing else. It was so far from being necessary, that any thing should have existed beside God, that it may be demonstrated, that he could have eternally prevented any other existence but his own. He could have existed alone, a solitary being, from eternity unto eternity. Now, if this could have been the case, then the consequence is plain, that God could not have foreknown all things from eternity, either by information, or by seeing any evidence of their existence, without himself, or within himself. The question now returns with redoubled force—How was it possible for God to foreknow all things from eternity? The only plain, pertinent, and satisfactory answer to this question is, that God foreknew all things from eternity, because he had decreed all things. God was under no natural necessity of creating any thing. It depended solely upon his will whether he should, or should not create the world. And it solely depended upon his pleasure what world he would create, and what and how many creatures he would bring into existence. It belonged to God to form his own plan of operation, from the beginning of the world, or before he began to operate. He could not have acted with perfect wisdom, without forming his ultimate end, and all the means to accomplish it, before he produced one effect, or gave existence to any material or immaterial object. Among

all possible events, he absolutely determined what should, and what should not take place. He determined the nature, the number, the magnitude, the order and the connection of all things, and left not a single creature, or a single object, or event to mere casualty or chance. He limited, adjusted and bound all things together, by his eternal and immutuable purpose. This appears from the perfection of the divine nature and from the express declaration of scripture. We are told that "God created all things by Jesus Christ, according to his *eternal purpose*, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now, it is easy to see that when God had determined all things, he could foreknow all things. He must know his own determinations, and by knowing these, he must know whatsoever would come to pass. For he made his determinations in unerring wisdom and perfect goodness, and therefore could never see any reason to alter them; and he knew his omnipotent power, to do whatever he had determined should be done. Hence it was as easy for him to foreknow all things from eternity as to determine all things from eternity. His foreknowledge was founded upon his decree and upon nothing else. For if he had not decreed any thing, he could not have foreknown any thing. If he had not decreed to create the world, he could not have foreknown that the world would exist. If he had not decreed to create angels and men, he could not have foreknown that

angels and men would exist. If he had not decreed how angels and men should conduct, he could not have foreknown how they would conduct. If he had not decreed their future and eternal state, he could not have foreknown their final and eternal destination. As his foreknowledge was founded upon his decree, so it must of necessity be bounded by it. It cannot extend to any thing, but what is decreed. God's attribute of knowledge extends to all possible events; but his foreknowledge extends only to events, that have existed and shall exist. God's foreknowledge is the fruit, or effect of his decree, as much as the works of his hand. God's foreknowledge is totally distinct from his essential attribute of knowledge. And it is altogether owing to men's not making this distinction, that any have supposed, that God could foreknow all things, without decreeing all things. They say God is omniscient, and his omniscience is a necessary and essential attribute of his nature. But who can suppose, that God's attribute of omniscience should enable him to know what is naturally impossible to be known? God is omnipotent; but who can suppose with any reason, that his attribute of omnipotence can enable him to do what is naturally impossible to be done? For instance, who can suppose, that God's almighty power can enable him to cause a thing to *exist* and *not exist* at the same time? Who then can suppose, that God's omniscience could have enabled him to foreknow from eternity,

that the world would exist, if he had not determined to cause it to exist. For if he had *not* determined to cause it to exist, it was naturally impossible that it should ever exist, and consequently it was equally impossible, that he should have foreknown, that it would ever exist. His foreknowing, therefore, that the world and all things in it would exist, was not owing to his attribute of omniscience, but to his decreeing that they should exist. His *foreknowledge* respecting all things is founded on his decree, and therefore is totally distinct from his natural and essential attribute of knowledge. There was no essential attribute of the divine nature, that could enable God to foreknow future events without his decree. There was no way, but one, in which it was possible for God to foreknow all things from eternity; and that was by decreeing all things. And as it is easy to see how God could foreknow all things in that way; so it is easy to see, that he could not foreknow them in any other way. There is really no more difficulty in seeing how God could foreknow all things from eternity, than in seeing how God could form a determination in his own mind, and know his determination after he had formed it. And there is really no more difficulty in seeing how God should form and know his own determinations; than to see how we ourselves can form and know our own determinations. Nothing but the plain and inseparable connection between the foreknowledge of God and his decrees has been the occa-

sion of involving the divine foreknowledge in darkness and difficulty. Those, who would account for the foreknowledge of God without his decrees, have always found the subject dark and incomprehensible. But those, who see and maintain, that the foreknowledge of God is founded upon his decrees, have found no difficulty in believing the plain declaration of the apostle, who said—"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

From the view we have now taken of the foreknowledge of God, it may be remarked,

1. That it is absurd for any to allow his foreknowledge and yet deny his decrees. This many really and professedly do. They say they believe that God foreknew all things from eternity, but do not believe that he decreed all things. Now this is very absurd. Because God could not foreknow all things, if he had not decreed them.—What is uncertain cannot be foreknown. But the certainty of the future existence of all things, or of any thing, was founded entirely upon the decrees of God. And there was no possible way, even for God to know any future event, which he had not decreed, because no such event could take place.—They, therefore, who deny the decrees of God and yet profess to believe that he foreknows all things, admit a palpable absurdity. It could hardly be conceived that any persons, who regard either reason or revelation, could be so absurd in their opinions, were it not common for men by professing them-

selves to be wise, to become fools.

2. It is absurd for any to believe and say, that the foreknowledge of God extends further than his decrees. This many do believe and say. They say God foreknew all the conduct of free and voluntary agents; but never decreed it. But on what foundation did the certainty of their future conduct, which God foreknew, depend? Upon nothing, unless he had decreed their conduct. If he had not decreed their conduct, how could he know it? Or how was it certain? And how could he foreknow what was uncertain? How could God foreknow and foretel Pharaoh's conduct, unless he had decreed it? How could he foreknow and foretel the conduct of Cyrus and of Judas, unless he had decreed their conduct? Since the foreknowledge of God depends on his decree, it is vain to pretend that he foreknows what he has not decreed, or that his decrees are not as extensive as his foreknowledge.

3. Since the foreknowledge of God is founded on his decrees, it is absurd to say they are both the same thing. It is true that foreknowledge proves the certainty of future events, as well as the decrees. But foreknowledge does not make things certain. It is not the foundation, but the consequence of their certainty. But the decrees of God are not the consequence, but the foundation of the certainty of future events. It is then absurd to say, what is often said—that there is no difference between divine foreknowledge and decree. This

is probably said in many instances, to avoid a proper examination of an important subject, which is very unpleasant to such persons, as are disposed to say unto God—"Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

4. It is wrong to blend the decrees and foreknowledge of God with his agency. The agency of God is distinct from his decrees. For it is the execution of his decrees in the works of creation and providence. God is not always decreeing what he will do and what shall be done. But he is always executing his decrees by his most holy, wise and powerful preservation and government of all his creatures and all their actions. The apostle says, *God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.* This is a just description of his supreme and universal agency. It is the agency of God that brings things into existence, and makes their existence necessary. But divine foreknowledge causes nothing to exist. The decrees of God do not cause any existence: But by his agency God creates, preserves and governs all things. And after all, it is against the divine agency that sinful and dependent creatures level all their objections. But the agency of God is holy, just and good, and affords the firmest support and purest delight to all his friends. And for their benefit, as well as for the conviction of the unholy and unrighteous, the divine agency, as distinct from the decrees and foreknowledge of God, ought to be plainly

taught, as it is always in his holy and blessed word.

Finally—Since the decrees and foreknowledge of God lay at the foundation of all his works, they do also lie at the foundation of all religion, both natural and revealed. For, strip God of his decrees and foreknowledge, and he is no longer the proper object of religious worship. He is not the supreme, independent and self-existent Creator, Preserver and Governor of the universe. He no longer deserves to be loved and worshipped for the works of creation, providence and redemption.—So those have thought, who have denied the decrees and foreknowledge of God. This was the opinion of the Epicureans in ancient times. And this was also the opinion of European deists, of Bolingbroke and others. Such a being as has neither decreed, nor foreknown all things is not a proper object of holy fear, love, confidence, gratitude and complacency to rational creatures. But that great and holy being, who says—"My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure;" and who knows all his works from the beginning of the world, is worthy of all the service and worship he requires of the creatures he has made, preserves and governs. The decrees and consequent foreknowledge of God display his real character and are the foundation of all real religion. Hence the assembly of divines, in their system of religious instruction, very early and fully declare the doctrine of God's decrees. They say—"The decrees of God are his eternal

purpose according to the counsel of his own will, whereby for his own glory he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass." And all religious instructors, who would give their hearers the true knowledge of God and exhibit the proper reasons for love, esteem, worship, obedience, submission and gratitude to their Creator, must plainly and fully teach his decrees and foreknowledge.



### *The blinding influence of Moral Depravity.*

THE proper seat of moral depravity has been much disputed by different denominations of Christians, who acknowledge the general depravity of mankind. Some suppose that all depravity is seated in the understanding. Some suppose it equally belongs to all the powers and faculties of the soul. And some suppose it is seated wholly in the heart. This last opinion appears to be maintained by the apostle, when he says, "Having their understanding darkened, because of the blindness of the heart." He places all moral darkness, ignorance, blindness and depravity in the heart. And the truth of this will appear from various considerations.

It appears from the nature of moral depravity. This is altogether different from natural depravity, which consists in wounds, bruises, or putrefying sores, and affects only the body. There is no criminality in the infirmities, or defects of the corporal system. If we lose the use of an eye, or an ear, or even

of any of our intellectual powers, there is no criminality in this natural depravity. But the least degree of moral depravity is criminal, and renders us obnoxious to the divine displeasure.— Every affection, volition, or exercise of the heart has a moral quality, and is of a criminal nature. Hence it is evident that moral depravity cannot be seated in the understanding, which is a faculty of perceiving, arranging and comparing our ideas, and of discerning their agreement, or disagreement with each other. This faculty is the proper seat of what we call *speculative knowledge*; in which there is not the least degree of criminality. Nor can moral depravity lie in the conscience, which is another distinct faculty of the soul, by which we discern the nature of *moral objects*, and determine what is good and evil, right and wrong in a moral view. The exercise of this faculty, as distinguished from the heart, is neither virtuous nor vicious, but only a judgment of what is so. The intellectual faculties of men have no moral quality. There is, therefore, no room for moral depravity in the human mind, but only in the *heart*. This may be totally depraved, while the understanding and conscience, and every other intellectual faculty remain in their full strength, and without the least moral corruption.

Again—It appears from the express declarations of scripture, that the heart is the seat of moral depravity. In describing the wickedness of the ungodly world, God says, “ Every imagination of the thoughts of their heart is only evil continually.”

Solomon declares that “ the hearts of the sons of men is full of evil.” The prophet Jeremiah says, “ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Our Saviour represents the heart, as the source of all moral evil. “ O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” All the inspired writers agree in representing the heart as the seat of moral depravity. It is a scriptural proverb, “ As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” His heart determines his moral character, and denominates him either a saint, or a sinner. God nowhere in his word condemns men for any thing but their *hearts*, and the actions which flow from them. This is a clear proof, that moral depravity lies wholly in the heart.

Again—No application to the human mind can remove moral depravity, without a change of heart. God tried the Israelites in the wilderness with mercies and judgments; but no addresses to their understandings and consciences, to their hopes and fears, could remove their evil heart of unbelief. The preaching, the miracles, the sufferings, the death and resurrection of Christ were likewise insufficient to cure the perverse Jews of their moral depravity and hardness of heart. And the depravity of Satan has withstood all the light, which God has placed before him, and all

the punishments which he has inflicted upon him, in the course of more than six thousand years. No illumination of the understanding, no conviction of the conscience of a sinner, will have the least tendency to remove his moral depravity. This Solomon long ago observed ; " Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." If depravity lay in the understanding, or the conscience, or any intellectual faculty, it seems that the exhibition of proper light and suitable motives would remove it. And since these have always failed of producing this effect, we are constrained to conclude, that depravity lies in the heart, and that nothing but a change of heart will take it away. And this leads me to observe, once more—

That a change of heart will entirely remove moral depravity. Let the heart of any man only be purified by the influence of the divine Spirit, and his moral depravity will be effectually removed. Accordingly, when God promises to purify his people Israel, and cleanse them from their moral pollution and depravity, he says he will do it, by sanctifying their hearts. " A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." And the apostle represents God as enlightening the understanding, by shining into the hearts of believers. " For he, who commanded the light

to shine from darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Now, if God removes the blindness of the mind, and takes away moral depravity, by shedding abroad his love in the heart, then, it is very evident, that depravity is wholly seated in the heart. For, if depravity did not lie in the heart, the changing of the heart would have no tendency to remove it. These observations seem sufficient to establish the point that moral depravity lies wholly in the heart. Yet this depravity has a darkening, or blinding influence upon all the intellectual faculties of the mind. This the apostle asserts when he says. *The understanding is darkened, because of the blindness of the heart.* And this appears to be the general representation of scripture. Our Saviour plainly conveyed this idea when he said, " The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." The apostle Paul says, " The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And again he says—" Unto the pure all things are pure ; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure ; but even the mind and conscience is defiled." All moral depravity consists in selfishness, which must blind every mind that is under the influence of

it, in respect to every thing that is of a moral and religious nature. A totally selfish heart will affect all the intellectual faculties of the soul and either prevent, or pervert their proper exercise.

The depravity of the heart directly tends to prevent sinners from attending to moral and religious subjects. Those who do evil, hate light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. Selfishness perfectly hates holiness, and will, if possible, divert the attention from all holy objects. It is owing to the depravity of the heart, that sinners like not to retain God in their knowledge, and say unto him, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. The apostle tells us that the blindness of the heart darkens the understanding, by alienating the affections from God. The great ignorance of natural men in respect to divine things is greatly owing to the depravity of their hearts, which prevents their employing their intellectual faculties upon God, and his ways and word. So long as a man keeps his eyes shut, he can receive no light from the sun, nor information from surrounding objects. So the apostle John tells us, the light of divine truth will have no influence upon those, whose understandings are darkened by the blindness of the heart. "The light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." It was the depravity of heart, that prevented the Jews from hearkening to Christ, and receiving divine light and instruction from him. Deprav-

ity of heart has restrained thousands and thousands from attending to divine objects, and hearkening to divine instruction, which has kept them in a state of deplorable ignorance, and darkness, in regard to those things, which most nearly concern them, both in time and eternity. But,

Again, If those, whose hearts are totally depraved, do attend to divine objects, yet their depravity makes them totally blind to the beauty of holiness. They cannot discern the moral excellence of God, or of Christ, or of any holy object in heaven, or in earth. Selfishness is total enmity to holiness, and alienates the heart from all holy beings, and objects. Though Satan has not lost any of his intellectual faculties, yet he has become totally blind to that moral beauty, which he once saw in God and the inhabitants of heaven. Just so it is with those, whose minds are under the blinding influence of moral depravity. They cannot discern the beauty of holiness in God, or his creatures, who bear his moral image. Could they see all the glory of God, all the glory of heaven, and all the moral excellence of all holy beings completely displayed, they could discern nothing lovely in their view ; but amidst so much light would feel themselves involved in total moral darkness. This is the representation of scripture from beginning to end. Sinners are represented as blind, as deaf, as ignorant, and even as dead ; which are figurative expressions to signify, not their want of natural powers of percep-

tion and understanding, but their total blindness, to the beauty of holiness and the supreme excellence of divine objects. But though what has been said may convince us of the truth of the general observation, that the moral depravity of sinners blinds all their intellectual faculties; yet it may be proper and necessary to take notice of some objections against this doctrine.

It may be objected, that there is not such a great distinction between the heart and the understanding, as has been represented, for the scriptures sometimes use them synonymously.—To this it may be answered, that though the scripture may sometimes use the word heart in a loose and general sense, so as to comprehend the understanding, or other natural faculties of the soul; yet the inspired writers do often make a distinction between the heart and all other powers of the mind. They distinguish the desires, affections and volitions of the heart, from all the exercises of reason, conscience and every other natural faculty. And this distinction is founded in nature and discovered by experience. All men often find the desires and affections of their hearts, in direct opposition to the dictates of reason and conscience, which affords intuitive knowledge that the heart is totally distinct from all the natural faculties of the soul.

It is sometimes objected that the understanding is *the leading faculty* of the mind, and consequently the heart cannot blind and control the understanding. But the understanding is not the

leading faculty of the soul, if by leading faculty is meant, that which excites men to action. For men always act according to the *inclination of their hearts*, but not always agreeably to the dictates of their reason. And when they do act agreeably to the dictates of their reason and conscience, it is because the *heart* at that time coincides with the dictates of their reason, or natural faculties.

It is also objected, that the scripture represents depravity as consisting in ignorance, which supposes that it lies wholly in the understanding.—But when the scripture represents depravity, as consisting in ignorance, it always means that ignorance, which arises from the blindness of the heart. This is the ignorance of which the apostle speaks, when he says, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of the heart.” Besides, the scripture represents light and knowledge in the understanding, not as removing moral depravity from sinners, but as increasing it. “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin.” “He that knoweth his master’s will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.” And again—“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light.” These passages demonstrate that ignorance in the understanding, is not moral depravity, but ignorance of the heart is, which blinds the understanding, and opposes its

dictates.—To this it may be added—That to suppose moral depravity consists in the want of intellectual light, is contrary to common sense and the nature of moral depravity. For ignorance in the understanding, or want of information always excuses men. When they act up to the knowledge they have, they act perfectly right and stand justified before God and in their own consciences. It is impossible, that there should be the least moral evil in the conduct, or feelings of men, while their hearts are free from moral depravity and perfectly benevolent. The supposition, therefore, that depravity lies in the understanding is totally inconsistent with any such thing as moral evil in the universe.—All moral agents must be conscious of being free from sin, while they perfectly act up to the dictates of reason and conscience. But whenever their hearts oppose those dictates, then, and then only, do they find themselves chargeable with blame. Thus it appears, that all moral depravity lies in the heart, and can exist, and be found in no other corner of the mind.

As the subject, to which we have been attending in the present essay, is intimately connected with the leading doctrines of divine revelation, it may be proper to suggest a number of reflections.

1. Since moral depravity is wholly in the heart, there is no absurdity in the doctrine of *total depravity*. Many deny that sinners are totally depraved; because, they say, total depravity is a plain absurdity, and contra-

dicted by universal observation and experience. They say, sinners are capable of knowing as much about the world, the arts and sciences, and even about the bible, as saints; and therefore they cannot be totally depraved. It is true that sinners have the same natural faculties as saints; and are as capable of correct speculative knowledge as saints. But the highest degrees of such knowledge are consistent with total depravity. The depravity of sinners always increases with their knowledge. It is said, that sinners have as clear discernment of right and wrong as saints. It must be admitted that this agrees with the instructions of scripture and the dictates of experience. But such discernment is consistent with total depravity. If they were not naturally capable of discerning between moral good and evil, they could not be guilty of that depravity, which is charged upon them in the holy scriptures. If sinners could not discern between moral good and evil, they never could be convicted of any wickedness and ill-desert. Total depravity could not exist in moral agents without that moral discernment of which sinners are capable. But with this discernment sinners are totally depraved. It is also said that sinners can perform all the duties of religion *externally*, as well as saints.—This is true. But this is consistent with total depravity, so evidently, that nothing need be said to prove it. It is further said, that sinners are as tender and compassionate to objects of distress, as saints. On this account it is confidently affirmed that they are not totally deprav-

ved. But the tenderness, compassion and sympathy, which sinners feel towards objects of distress are consistent with total selfishness. They do often exist and appear in the worst of men. But there is an essential difference between the natural tenderness and compassion of sinners and that holy love, which is the essence of moral virtue. Correct views of the moral depravity of sinners will show that there is no absurdity in the term, nor in the doctrine of *total depravity*. Their total depravity is a plain matter of fact.

2. Since moral depravity lies wholly in the heart, sinners are so far from acting according to the greatest apparent good, that they never do act according to it. They do not in a state of stupidity. For stupid sinners know that there are greater and better objects than they pursue and love. When sinners are awakened and seriously concerned about their eternal interests, they do not love and choose what they are convinced are the most worthy and important objects. Their understanding and conscience always dictate and enjoin obedience to God. But though they know the importance and excellence of obeying him, through the depravity of their hearts they refuse to do it.

3. Since it is through their moral depravity that sinners are in darkness respecting divine objects, their spiritual ignorance is altogether criminal and inexcusable. They often excuse themselves, and think they are not to be blamed, because they are ignorant of divine subjects. But since they are ignorant "because of the blindness of the heart,"

their ignorance is their crime.

4. If the moral depravity of sinners blinds their natural faculties, then we may see in what that light and knowledge, which God gives to his people consists. They are said to be called into the light, to be called into marvellous light; they are said to know God, and to know Christ, and to know all divine and spiritual subjects. Now this peculiar light and knowledge consists essentially in holy love, or benevolence, which is the opposite of that moral depravity that blinds and darkens the minds of sinners. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

5. The effect of the Holy Spirit in renewing the hearts of sinners consists in holy affections. In this great work there is no new natural faculty produced. There is no need, and there is no room, for the production of any new principle, relish, or taste, that is distinct from holy affections. "*The fruit of the Spirit is love.*" And the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of saints by the Holy Spirit." Let the moral depravity of sinners be truly described, and it will be easily seen that the production of holy affections is all that the Holy Spirit does effect, or needs to effect in the hearts of sinners. Let holy love exist in the hearts of rational creatures, and they will have spiritual discernment and spiritual enjoyment.

Finally—We may mention the special grace of God in renewing the hearts of sinners. This is not removing a calamity, but removing criminality. It is doing what sinners do not

deserve, nor desire ; but oppose. And this is an act of special and sovereign grace. And it lays the subjects of it under special obligations to serve and praise the author of their holiness and salvation. Hence the apostle Peter says to his Christian brethren—" ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."



*Arguments for Christian Liberality, drawn from the Prophetic period in which we live, and from the situation of our own Country.*

**A**T the present day, beyond any other period of time, it is the duty of Christians, to give liberally of their property, for the propagation of the gospel and of the scriptures among heathen nations.—I will enforce this observation by two arguments.—The first argument shall be drawn from the prophecies ; and if this be made apparent ; the second will naturally arise from our own interest, and our political preservation, in the strange day that it hath pleased God we should live.

There is a remarkable prophetic description of the time in which we live ; it is in the fourteenth chapter of the Revelations—" And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto those that dwell on the earth, and to every

nation, and kindred, and tongue and people. Saying, fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come ; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea and fountains of waters"—And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."—Let the reader consider well, this wonderful vision, and compare it with the present events in the providence of God, and he certainly cannot be at a loss, in what part of the prophetic period we live.

At the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established ; and here we have three cotemporary angelic witnesses, to the three prominent features of the present day.—He first declares, the gospel shall now be preached, to every creature of every tongue and language in the earth. The second saith, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen ! and is drinking the cup of divine indignation ; and the third saith, that if any man worship the beast and his image, and received his mark in his forehead or his hand, the same

shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.

Let us now see how far events, and the providence of God, do at the present time, compare with those prophetic, angelic descriptions.—First, those who have worshipped the beast and his image ; those who have received his principles of blood, apostacy and infidelity ; those who have voluntarily joined in the war of the present day, are now drinking of the wine of the wrath of God.—Under the influence of their own principles and passions, they are causing the earth to drink up fountains of their own blood, which honest Christians would not dare to shed.—

Secondly, The papal Babylon, in its efficient influence is fallen. In its political influence among men, it is now as much debased, as it ever was exalted in pride. It is the scorn and derision of infidel children, which have swarmed from its own womb. In an ecclesiastical point of view, it has less influence and is more base than the other base things of an apostate and infidel world.—Look to the other witness. The angel is flying through heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. It is a time of wo to the world, but blessed be the name of the King in Zion, that his angels are flying through the midst of heaven, having his everlasting gospel to preach in every tongue. But is this a truth? Let the reader look to facts. The stubborn nature of facts must convince ev-

ery considerate person this is truth.—Regard the providence of God, confirming his word. While one angel saith, “ Wo to the inhabitants of the earth,” and another, “ Babylon is fallen ;” their precursor saith, “ let the everlasting gospel be preached to all flesh”. Witness the effused spirit, and the great efforts for the propagation of the gospel that have been in the English and the northern parts of the American church, within these last twenty years ; the same period in which the dying groans of Babylon have been heard!—Witness the Missionary, and Bible Societies that have been formed!—Witness the British and Foreign Bible Society, that in the last year expended 4700 pounds sterling, in the distribution of bibles and testaments, in many languages, and to all men who would gratuitously accept the word of God!—See the great number of Bible Societies in the American church!—Go to the populous regions of Asia, and there see how the gospel of Christ is translating and printing in fifteen different languages, wherein it was never before written! Go to the coasts of Asia, Africa and America, and see men of many Islands and many climes, inquiring for the word of life, and beginning to speak of Jesus! But I will not detain my readers at so great a distance, any longer.—I will bring them, and as I hope, present to them, their own hearts.—

Readers, does not the voice of your Lord’s spirit, say within you, let this gospel of the kingdom be preached to men of

all nations, and are you not willing to contribute to such a purpose?—After what has been written, can there be needed any further evidence of the prophetic period in which we live?

But to excite liberality, for the propagation of the gospel and the scriptures among heathen nations. I have another argument, drawn from our interest and our political preservation in this day of uncommon events. I shall state this argument in the fewest words possible.—If the time is come when the gospel shall be preached to all; if this work must be done by means and instruments, as I presume no person will doubt; then, that people, that church, that state, which contribute most liberally to the purpose, have the best reason to hope for divine preservation, at a time, when the earth is dissolving by the judgments of the Lord.—God grant the American people may turn to the Lord in the day of his judgments, and be among the happy instruments of spreading the gospel through the earth. If there be any infidels in America, we beg them to remember, that the Christian Redeemer, reigneth among the nations.

#### HUMILIS.

---

*On the Religious State of Abyssinia.*

[Concluded from p. 398.]

**H**IS son, Seltem Saged, was assailed by the Romish

Patriarch, with the most persevering importunity, to restore him to the possession of the power of which he had been deprived.—The reply of the young prince throws much light on the religious state of Abyssinia at the time when these events took place in that country. It is as follows :

“ The letter of Seltem Saged, cometh to the Patriarch, with the peace of God.

“ My Lord,

“ Hear what we say and write to you : we have received your letter, and do understand all that it contains. As to your desiring to know why we have turned you out of the post wherein God and the emperor had placed you ; your lordship cannot but be sensible, that so long as we were under our father the Emperor, we never disobeyed him in any one thing ; nor did we ever so much as open our mouth against any thing that he did ; but were so submissive to him in all things, that we never said, I will have this, or I will have that ; or I like this, or dislike that ; insomuch, that I do not remember, that during his life, I ever did any thing of my own head, but did still what he commanded me. As to the business of your religion, our soul never entered into its councils, neither did we ever join with any counsellors either to build it up, or destroy it. We need not be told, that the Emperor sent for your lordship, and that the fathers likewise came with his consent ; as we need not, that ever since your coming he has been continually embroiled in wars for

endeavoring to establish your faith ; fighting sometimes with his sons, and at other times with his slaves, whom he had raised from the dunghill to great honors : in so much that, from the first hour we were able to bear arms, we have never done any thing but fight in obedience to our father's commands, which we always obeyed. After the battle I had in the beginning of this winter with Ognadega, our learned monks and people having assembled themselves together in the camp, took the confidence to tell my father their thoughts freely in the following words :— ‘Sir, how long are we to be plagued thus, and to tire ourselves about things that are good for nothing ? We desire to know, when we are to give over fighting with our kinsfolks and brethren ; or cutting our right hand off with our left ?’ What great difference is there betwixt the Roman faith and ours ? For do they of Rome teach, that there are two natures in Christ ; and have not we always believed and taught the same, in affirming that our Lord Christ is perfect God and perfect man ; perfect man as to his humanity, and perfect God as to his divinity ? But whereas those his two natures are not separated, his divinity being united to the flesh, and not separated from it, and his flesh to the divinity ; we do not for that reason affirm them to be two, but one ; being made so out of two causes, and that not so as to confound and mix those natures in their beings ; but on the account of their being one and the same principle, we call them by the name of

that union ; so that our controversy with them in this matter is of small importance : neither was it the cause of our having had so much fighting, but it was because they denied us the blood in the communion, notwithstanding Christ has told us positively in his Gospel, that unless we eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not inherit eternal life. And notwithstanding that Christ himself, when he instituted the sacrament, after having given his body to his disciples, and received it himself, did not say, ‘The blood is in my flesh which I have given you ;’ but on the contrary, he said, ‘Take and drink, and divide it among you :’ his disciples doing as he commanded them, and as he gave them to understand by saying, ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’ Neither was this the only thing that discontented the people.” &c.

“For these and divers other reasons, the people far and near were much discontented, and said to the Emperor, ‘Hear what we have to say, and either give us leave to live quietly, or knock us on the head, since the war does thicken upon us daily.’ When the Emperor was told this by all his people, he, without our joining with them in it, finding that there was no other way to quiet their minds, and that he would not be able to punish them much longer, commanded his counsellors to advise together what was best to be done ; who, after a serious consult, came to this resolution, that they must all return to their ancient religion and customs.

"Your lordship, in being acquainted with this, will know the reason why you are turned out of your place, which God and the emperor had bestowed on you ; and that the very same emperor that sent for your lordship, and gave you your authority, was the person that deprived you of it : wherefore since an Alexandrian abuna (bishop) is on his way hither, and he has sent us word, that he cannot be in the same country with a Roman patriarch and fathers ; we have ordered you to repair to Fremona, and there to remain. As to what your lordship now offers, which is, that if the people of Ethiopia will but continue in the obedience of the Roman church, you will dispense with them as to all matters which are not contrary to the faith ; that comes too late now ; for how is it possible for them to return to that which they have not only forsaken, but do abominate, now they have had a taste of their old religion again ?—For can a grown man be born again, or enter a second time into his mother's womb ? Your lordship further desires, that we would assemble our learned men to dispute with you before you depart, about matters of faith : this ought also to have been done in the beginning ; besides, is that cause like to be supported by arguments, which has been maintained hitherto only by force and violence ? By taking estates from some, and throwing others into prison, and punishing others more severely ; and that for no other reason, but because they would not embrace your faith ? And as if that had not been sufficient,

you have dragged great multitudes out of the deserts, who would have been contented to have lived there upon herbs, and confined them to prisons ; nay, the poor people that would have been glad to have buried themselves in caves, not having escaped your persecution.—Now what a barbarity would it be, to go and tease poor people with arguments, who have suffered so much in deserts and banishments ? It would certainly be a very unjust thing, both in the sight of God and man. As to your lordship's desiring to have a Portuguese guard to attend you, that cannot be ; but we shall appoint a very honest man, and who has a great train of servants to convey your lordship, and all your goods in safety, to the place whither you are to go."

The Romish Patriarch, however, persisting in his attempts to recover his power, the Emperor sent him another letter, in which is the following passage.

"We must tell you, that now your expulsion is determined, it is to no purpose to allege reasons why you cannot go ; and that if you should shuffle any longer with our orders, it will be your ruin. Have we taken any thing from you that you have got in Ethiopia, that you should disobey us, and say you will not go ? This is not right. Begone, therefore, without making any further reply or excuse ; your expulsion being determined, as you will understand by the order you will receive."

It is impossible not to feel warmly interested in the des-

tinies of this people, and to desire and pray that their constancy, in resisting the papal yoke, and maintaining the paramount authority of the scriptures, may be rewarded by an influx, in these latter days, of scriptural light, which may make that country the means of enlightening the adjacent regions of Africa and Asia, lying at present in the depth of Mohammedan darkness. I know no project which has been entertained by the British and Foreign Bible Society, numerous and excellent as have been their projects of beneficence, which promises a richer harvest of blessings than that of giving the pure word of God to the millions of Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

S.

#### REMARKS.

THE EDITOR thought it to be his duty to transfer the above from the Christian Observer to this Magazine. There was a time, and some who read this Magazine can recollect it, when even in the Northern American States, slavery was not thought to be contrary to the laws of God, of nature and of the gospel. Although slavery was never prevalent in the Northern States, there were too many instances of it. Some, now living, whom we believe to be Christians, were sustained by the toil, and nursed in the arms of slaves from Africa. Our parents sinned in ignorance, and we are not guilty of the deed; but is there no reparation to be made to the country and the lineage of the

sufferers? Millions of the Africans have been brought slaves into America. We now clearly see that this was a great sin, for which it is probable God will yet bring us into judgment.— For national sins, ought there not to be national reparation? Doth not common sense, and the principles of common justice teach us, there is an obligation on American Christians, to adopt the most effectual means for transmitting the gospel of Christ into the dark, interior regions of Africa? On American Christians there cannot be a greater obligation to any other tract on the globe, that is in a state of heathenism. That there are judgments in store for the sin of slave-holding, no man can doubt, who hath just sentiments of the principles of God's moral government. Who knows but suitable efforts to spread the gospel into the interior of Africa, may be the means of rendering these judgments less dreadful? Certainly we have reason to make the attempt. He, who reigns graciously in Zion, and searches the heart, may see the desire and bless the attempt; and he may say that he repented himself of the judgments that are due to a portion of country, which once sinned in ignorance, and did not perceive that the laws of Christ forbid slavery.

As for those parts of the American country, which still retain the idea, that slavery is just, the writer hath nothing to say in extenuation, after all possible evidence of the sin hath been set before them. May the Lord have mercy

on minds ignorantly blinded through selfishness ; and give wisdom to honest and Christian politicians, to whom belongs the duty of retrieving their country from a perilous situation.

The duty recommended, doubtless devolves of right on the American Board for Foreign Missions.—To them the liberal Christian public, have committed this trust, and they doubtless are able to fulfil it wisely. Their past determinations have doubtless been correct. It is not to impeach their measures, but to draw the attention of the public, to new fields of missionary exertion, that these remarks are made.

### *Religious Intelligence.*

#### ..... FOREIGN. .....

[Before the revolution, a religious Society was known in America, under the name which is placed below.—From the Christian Observer, we extract the following concerning this Society; by which it appears they are awaking from the formal slumbers in which they have long been held.—The institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, with its popularity and success, have been the principal means, of this reanimation.]

E.D.

#### **SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.**

WE have been desired to insert the following memorandum :—

The Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, having of late years found great difficulty in prevailing with proper clergymen to go abroad in their service, and conceiving that one cause of this disinclination arises from an ignorance of the whole of the emoluments and advantages annexed to the situation of a missionary in the colonies to which they are sent, think it proper to publish the following more full account than what appears in the general annual abstract of their proceedings.

The colonies to which the Society send out missionaries are these following : Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Upper and Lower Canada, Cape Breton, and Africa.

It may be useful to notice, that before the Society send out a missionary to any new place, the people first petition the Society to do it, and signify that they are able and willing to contribute towards his support. In general, it is required that a church be built, a glebe secured, a parsonage-house erected, and a subscription entered into by the people themselves, or such engagements made as may induce the Society to establish a mission before they are completed ; but where the people have failed in the performance, the missionary has been removed to another station.

Upon the opening of a new mission, the Society grant a yearly salary of 50l. Afterwards, it is increased or diminished according as circumstances may seem to require, the glebe lands being in some pla-

ces of more value than in others. Half a year salary is advanced to each missionary upon his going abroad, and an allowance made towards the charge of the voyage, generally, about 30*l.*

Besides this, great aid has been afforded by Government towards carrying on the pious designs of the Society. In the province of Nova Scotia thirteen missionaries now enjoy an annual salary from Government of 70*l.* or 75*l.* In New Brunswick nine missionaries have each 100*l.* a year. To the missionary at Cape Breton 100*l.* a year is allotted. And to five missionaries in Newfoundland 50*l.* a year, with some allowance of rations, in addition to the Society's salary of 100*l.*

The missionaries in Canada have each of them an annual salary of 100*l.* from Government, and no one has less than 50*l.* from the Society. The other growing advantages from glebe, subscription, and other contingencies, cannot be accurately stated, as they must be subject, from many causes, to variation and uncertainty, and will be governed in some respects by the abilities of the people, and the estimation in which the missionary is held.

In addition to this, it should be observed, that the Society, ever attentive to the necessities of their missionaries, have been accustomed, as occasions required, to reward the diligent for any extraordinary services, and to alleviate the distresses of those who have been afflicted with sickness, or sustained any unforeseen losses and calamities, by pecuniary gratuities.

The Society allow to four students in divinity at King's College in Nova Scotia, 30*l.* a year each, during the term of seven years, with preference to sons of missionaries.

There is also some provision from an accumulation on a legacy of Archbishop Tenison, (the annual interest of which now amounts to 300*l.*) for "such missionaries, being Englishmen, and of the province of Canterbury, as have been by unavoidable accidents, sickness, or other infirmities of the body, or old age, disabled from the performance of their duties, and forced to return to England." Three missionaries have lately enjoyed the benefit of it.

In future such missionaries as shall be sent from this country, and shall, after the faithful discharge of their duty for ten years, express their wish to return home, will receive a certificate from the governor of the province which will entitle them to 100*l.* per annum, during life, from Government, provided they do not leave their missions till they shall have first obtained permission from the Society.

These, with some other occasional advantages, are the encouragements held out by the Society to such pious and well disposed clergymen as are willing to enter into their service.



[The Episcopal Church of England, is the parent church from which the present dissenters of England, and the Presbyterian and Congregational churches of New-

England originated.—The thirty-nine Articles of the English church as established by the law of the realm, would be judged correct by the greater part of the churches in New-England.—It was from certain forms, and ceremonial observances, which our fathers supposed unscriptural that they dissented.—Nothing was more offensive to them than the non-residency of their appointed teachers.—The clergy of that church are supported by tythes or tenths of the profits of agriculture and business, determined by law.—Many of the clergymen, supported by this common tax on all the people, through episcopal favor are permitted to reside without the limits of their ministrations, and officiate with their people but a small part of the time. These are called non-residents. A great number of the clergy and most pious friends of the established church have for years been attempting to expose this evil to public view.—Among these clergymen and civilians are the gentlemen by whom the Christian Observer is patronized. For the information of the religious public in this country the following is extracted from the Observer :]

ED.

#### PAROCHIAL CLERGY.

SOME very important papers have recently been laid on the table of the House of Commons relative to the residence of the Parochial Clergy and other points intimately connected with the welfare of the Established

Church. We will endeavor to put our reader in possession of the substance of these papers.

1. *An Abstract of Returns respecting Non-residence for the year ending 25th March, 1809.*

Of 11,194 incumbents, the total number returned as resident in this year is only 3836. Of course, the enormous number of 7,358 is returned non-resident. Of these, 105 though not living in the parsonage-house, reside within the parish, and may therefore be considered as resident. There are also 565 who reside in the neighborhood, and do the duty of their parishes. But whether they can do this duty effectually, must of course depend on the distance of their place of residence from the proper scene of their labors: it would make a very material difference whether they reside half a mile, or five or ten miles beyond the bounds of their parishes. The number of exemptions on the score of a plurality of livings is 1240; and the number of incumbents possessing small livings who are licensed to curacies and endowed lectureships, &c. is 273. The number of exemptions and licencies, on the ground of their holding other offices, as chaplains, tutors, schoolmasters, students, librarians, &c. is 670. The livings held by bishops are 26; and the sinecures and dignities, not requiring residence, 233. The number non-resident, from the alleged infirmity of the incumbent or some part of his family, is 465; from the want or unfitness of parsonage-houses, 944; and from the dilapidation of churches, 23. The number of miscella-

neous and unenumerated cases is 1325 ; the exemptions not notified are 817 ; and the number absent without license or exemption is 671.

*2. Abstract of the Number of Non-resident and Resident Incumbents for the year 1810.*

The total number of incumbents in this return differs from that in the preceding return, being only 10,261. The number of residents is somewhat increased, being 4421 : of course, the non-residents amount to 5,840. But to which of these classes the 933 incumbents who appear to have been omitted in the return for 1810 belong, it is impossible to say—probably, however, to the latter, as there is reason to suppose that at least the number of residents is correctly given. The number residing within the parish, though not in the parsonage, is only 62 ; and residing in the neighborhood and doing the duty of the parish, 348. The number of exemptions on the ground of residence on other benefices has risen in this year from 1,240 to 1,846. The number of exemptions and licenses, on the ground of being licensed to curacies, proprietary chapels, endowed lectureships, &c., is 214 ; and on the ground of holding other offices, as chaplainships, tutorships, fellowships, &c. 585. The livings held by bishops are 35 ; the sinecures and dignities not requiring residence, 79. The number non-resident, from the infirmity of the incumbent or of his family, is 389 ; from the want or unsuitness of parsonage-houses, 941 ; from dilapidated churches, 34. The number of

miscellaneous and unenumerated cases of non-residence is 63. The absentees without license or exemption are 650 ; and the exemptions not notified are 363. The vacancies are 74 ; the recent institutions, 54 ; and the livings held by sequestration, 91.

We find a great difficulty in reconciling the returns of these two years ; the variations are so considerable as to defeat every attempt to reconcile them.

*3. Abstract of the Number of Resident and Licensed Curates, with the Amount of the Salaries of the Curacies for the year 1810.*

The total number of curates of non-resident incumbents is 3,694. The number of these returned resident within the parish, is only 1,587. The number of curates licensed to the parish is 1808. The number of curates on livings where the incumbents are non-resident by licence, is 1745. Of these, 45 have 10*l.* a year ; 191 have 20*l.* a year ; 428 have 30*l.* a year ; 333 have 40*l.* a year ; 293 have 50*l.* a year ; 208 have 60*l.* a year ; 144 have 70*l.* a year ; 51 have 80*l.* a year ; 7 have 90*l.* a year ; 41 have 100*l.* a year ; one has 110*l.* one has 120*l.* one has 130*l.* and one has 250*l.* a year. Seventeen of these have the whole of the income.

*4. Abstract of the total Number of Parishes in England and Wales, with their population ; the Number of Churches and Chapels, with the Number of Persons they will contain ; and the Number of Dissenting Places of Worship therein.*

There is a manifest defect in this title : it ought to be the

number of parishes "containing upwards of 1000 inhabitants." The total number of such parishes is 1881 : the total amount of their population, 4,937,782 ; the number of churches and chapels in such parishes, 2533 ; the number of persons which these 2533 churches and chapels will contain, 18,56,108 ; and the number of dissenting places of worship within the same space, 3438.

We wish, for the present, merely to record these returns. We shall probably soon have occasion to refer to them largely. In the mean time, we cannot help expressing our astonishment, that, amid all the alarms excited in the minds of some of our bishops, archdeacons, and divinity professors, for the safety of the church, by Bible Societies, Lancasterian schools, methodist chapels, dissenting meeting-houses, enthusiasts within the church and without the church, Gospel preachers, evangelical clergymen, Calvinists, &c. &c. hardly one of them should have been led to contemplate, at least to expose, the far more urgent danger arising from the non-residence of the clergy. Whatever evil there may be in the rapid progress of methodism and dissent, they may unquestionably be considered as deriving much of their prevalence from this source ; and the writers to whom we allude may be assured, that until the number of active, laborious, pious *resident* clergy is greatly increased, all hope of arresting their progress is utterly vain. To this point, therefore, should their efforts be mainly directed.

#### DOMESTIC.

.....

*State of Religion within the limits of the North American Presbyterian Church; extracted from the Minutes of the last Meeting of their General Assembly.*

THE Committee appointed for the purpose brought in a narrative on the state of religion, which being amended, was adopted, as follows.

Though complaints have been heard from some parts within our bounds, of coldness, luke-warmness, and indifference to the things of religion ; yet, during the course of the past year, there appears to have been a very generally increased attention to the institutions of the gospel. A number of new congregations have been formed, and considerable additions made to the communion of the church. Warmly and firmly united in a strict adherence to the great doctrines of grace, our churches are living in harmony and brotherly affection, edified, and edifying one another.

Notwithstanding there have not been any general revivals, yet, with much pleasure, and with gratitude to Zion's King, we have heard that several parts of our church, particularly several congregations within the bounds of the Presbyteries of Geneva, Cayuga, Oneida. Columbia, Hudson, Jersey, New Brunswick, Harmony, and Miami, have been visited ; some with smaller, and others with more copious effusions of the influences of the Spirit. In some of these places, the power of divine and sovereign grace has

been displayed in several remarkable conversions ; and in others, much weight of influential character thrown decidedly into the scale of religion ; whilst they, who have been the professed and hopeful subjects of divine grace in late revivals, manifest the sincerity of their profession, by a conversation and deportment corresponding therewith.

An increased attention and diligence have been manifested to the duties of visiting and catechising—those important means of training up and establishing the rising generation in the truths of our holy religion.

Praying societies continue to be generally well attended ; and their number has considerably increased.

The continuance of Missionary Societies formerly established, with the formation of others, embracing in their plans, missions both foreign and domestic ; the increased number of societies for distributing Bibles and religious tracts, and for the education of poor children, manifest an active and growing zeal for extending the boundaries of the Mediator's kingdom, and diffusing the light of the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

It is with peculiar pleasure we here notice the active benevolence of pious females, associated in different places for prayer, for affording pecuniary aid to Missionary and Bible-societies, for establishing schools, and personally attending to the education, particularly of poor children.

The detail of the enlarged plan on which the General As-

sembly have been enabled to send missionaries into our extensive new settlements, the joy and gratitude with which they have been received, and the success with which it has pleased the great Head of the church to crown their labors, have been heard with tender and delightful emotions. The wilderness and the solitary places have been made glad for them, and the desert to rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Some awful displays of the power and displeasure of Jehovah, appear to have been instrumental in bringing a number of persons to serious reflection, and of inducing some to take refuge in the hope set before them in the gospel ; while others have remained asleep in fatal security. How stupid and thoughtless must they be, who, when numbers, enveloped in flames, have descended into one promiscuous tomb, do not lay to heart the uncertainty of life, and the all-important concerns of their souls ! How secure and hardened are they, who are not alarmed and excited to flee from the wrath to come, when God has thus arisen to shake terribly the earth, and whilst it is reeling and tottering under their feet, threatening to swallow them up in quick destruction !

Infidelity, though not entirely banished, in general affects obscurity and concealment from the light of the gospel.

Profane swearing, drunkenness, and sabbath-breaking, appear to be the crying sins of our land, against which the heralds of the cross, the professors of religion, and all who wish well to the interests of either civil or

religious society, are particularly called to oppose all the influence of warning, discipline, example and the execution of such wholesome laws as have been enacted against them.

The success of attention to the spiritual interests of the people of colour amongst us has, in some instances, been pleasing and encouraging.

Upon the whole, it appears that, whilst the General Assembly find cause to mourn over and to lament the errors and vices which are apparent among us, the luke warmness of some of our churches, and the multitudes who are still in an unconverted state, thoughtless and secure—they at the same time find great cause of joy, and of gratitude and praise to the great Head of the church for the union, the harmony, and the peace which prevails throughout our churches; for the generally increased attention to the institutions of religion; for the numbers, who, we trust, shall be saved, that have been added to our communion; and for the gracious visitation of several parts within our bounds, by the influence of his blessed Spirit. And they desire to improve these things, as excitements and encouragement to renewed exertions and endeavors. *Let the people praise thee, O Lord; let all the people praise thee. May Zion arise and shine. May she put on her beautiful garments. May she look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. May the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; and all the*

*ends of the earth see the salvation of our God.*

---

*State of Religion in the Congregational Churches of Vermont; extracted from the Minutes of their last Meeting.*

ALTHOUGH your committee feel a serious and deep regret, that they are not able to present a more pleasing picture of the present state of religion within your limits, yet they are sensible that it becomes them to bow with submission to the will of heaven.—That God sees fit to withhold the influences of his grace, though a cause of humiliation and regret, is no ground for complaints or murmurs. It is a fact, which, however lamentable, cannot be denied, that there have been fewer special revivals of religion in the state, during the past year, than during any preceding one, for several years before. A great stupidity and inattention to divine things has extensively prevailed. The attention of people, seems to be absorbed, very generally, in the concerns of this life. Especially does the political state of the country, appear to have excluded, in a great measure, the concerns of religion from the mind. Dangerous, and in some cases, new and very absurd errors, are advanced and embraced.—These errors, however, do not appear to have increased their prevalence, during the last year, and in several places, have evidently declined.

But notwithstanding these discouraging things, there is a brighter side to the picture. Although the friends of Zion have reason to mourn, they have none to despond. God has not forgotten to be gracious. He still gives his churches many tokens of his favor and love. Though the churches in the state, have not been in general, greatly enlarged, yet most of them have been somewhat increased, several very considerably, and very few have been diminished. In a few places, there have been considerable revivals of religion, and the Lord has made glorious displays of his power and mercy, in the deliverance of souls from the slavery of sin. The towns most highly favored with seasons of spiritual refreshing are Winhall, Jamaica, and Stratton, in the south part of the state; Braintree, Middlebury, and Cornwall, near the centre; and Greensborough, and Fairfield, towards the north part. In the latter place, about forty are thought to have been made subjects of divine grace, within a short period.—A pleasing revival of religion in Middlebury College, likewise, must be regarded as a very auspicious event, and a token for good to the church.

From other sections of the country, represented in this body, we have pleasing and animating intelligence. In some places within the limits of the Presbyterian church, we hear with the most grateful emotions, that the King of Zion is making signal displays of the power of his grace. From Connecticut, we learn, that besides

very encouraging revivals in some parts of the state, the churches in general, enjoying the stated ministrations of the gospel, are strengthened, edified and comforted. In Massachusetts, likewise, there are considerable revivals of religion, and an increasing harmony and affection among the churches and ministers of our common Lord. Here, also, a spirit of Christian charity and benevolence, which has for its object, the more extensive spread of the gospel, has remarkably manifested itself. The religious interests of New Hampshire, though there are things to be lamented, appear to wear a favorable aspect.

On the whole, your committee are of opinion, that notwithstanding the lamentable errors and vices, which prevail in the land, the cause of Christianity is advancing. The great Head of the church appears to be evidently fulfilling the promises of his word.—The friends of religion have great cause for gratitude and confidence. Let them, then, thank God and take courage. Instead of desponding under the discouragements which they experience, let them manifest their gratitude for the favors which they enjoy, by being unwearied in well doing, always abounding in the work of the Lord.—Especially, let them give themselves unto prayer, and resolve with the prophet, “For Zion’s sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.”

*The War with England.*

**A**LTHOUGH it is forbid to the pages of this Magazine to intermeddle with the political causes which have led to this untoward event ; yet, as the friends of religion and the souls of men, we cannot help expressing a deep regret, and calling on all the friends of Christ's kingdom, to inquire whether this scene of blood was necessary for the national preservation. In the ninth chapter of Genesis, we find the following divine declaration, " Whoso sheddeth men's blood, by men shall his blood be shed ; for in the image of God made he man."— Some have supposed these words are an express injunction to punish the sin of murder with death ; others have supposed it an express prohibition of offensive war. For the last opinion, there seems to be this warrant ; that it is difficult to find any difference between the shedding of blood by murder, and by offensive war, except it be this, that the first arises from personal, or rather from national enmity. But common sense cannot say, that the number of minds actuated by the principles of enmity, lessen the sin in the judgment of an infinite holy God.—Either England or America have to answer for all the innocent blood shed in this warfare. It cannot be supposed, that the people of common information, and who are under government will be called to account for it. It must be the rulers of these nations, either one or the other, or both that will have to answer for the guilt of this blood before the

bar of God. We solemnly call on both to resolve this question to their own consciences.

A second reason why, as the friends of religion and morality, we deplore the present war is, that by the experience of all mankind, a national state of war is unfriendly to moral virtue. Its natural tendency is to banish from the human mind a sense of men's high moral obligation, and of the value of life as a season of probation for eternity. It nurtures the passions of pride and self-dependence ; encourages every kind of immorality, and opens the door for all manner of fraud and deceit in the civil concerns of society.—It is a martial virtue to brave death ; it is a Christian virtue, to consider it as a moment for which much preparation is necessary.—These two we think to be generally incompatible.

The following contains a third reason why we deplore this war.

The inhabitants of Great Britain and the United States profess the same religion, and are united to each other by the dearest Christian ties.—A common spirit of philanthropy to the heathen world hath pervaded all denominations. They are united in many charitable institutions for preaching the essential doctrines of the gospel, and diffusing the holy scriptures in many heathen languages, wherein they were before never printed.—The hearts of God's people were united and rejoiced by these prospects ; but the present war hath cast a deep shade over the whole.— We who were brethren in giv-

ing the Christian religion to millions of perishing heathen, are now declared to be enemies to each other. Our designs are impeded, if not frustrated. We do deplore, and we will deplore the event. At the same time we will not be disheartened nor despair. Our Lord is on the throne, and he will prevail! but we are not afraid to warn all mankind of the danger that attends throwing these impediments in the way of the gospel.

ED.

---

## OBITUARY.

DIED at Norwich, on the 25th ult. His Excellency ROGER GRISWOLD, L. L. D. Governor and Commander in Chief of the State of Connecticut, aged 51. Governor Griswold has for several years past, labored under wasting and painful infirmity, and the hopes of his friends and the public have at length been disappointed by the termination of his useful and valuable life.—He was ten years a Representative in the Congress of the United States, from Connecticut. Here he shewed himself to be the enlightened patriot, and the firm and able statesman; and when he stood in the minority, his powerful arguments carried conviction and commanded respect, though they failed to persuade. After resigning his seat in the National Legislature, he returned to the practice of the law in his native State, and was shortly after appointed a Judge of the Superior Court. In this situation he was discerning, dispassionate and profound

in the administration of justice. In October, 1809, in consequence of the death of Gov. Trumbull, and the appointment of Gov. Treadwell, as his successor, he was appointed Lieut. Governor, which office he filled until May, 1811, when he was elected Governor of the State.

Governor Griswold possessed a strong and discriminating mind, and always stepped boldly forward in the path which his deliberate judgment had marked out. His reasoning powers were clear and forcible, unclouded by the sophistical and mysterious philosophy of the present age. In no situation has he shrunk from the obvious demands of duty, nor suffered a love of popularity to turn him aside from pursuing the best interests of his country. He was neither rash nor self-confident, but enquired for the truth, and formed from candid examination, his own result, which he pursued with energy and decision.

The death of so meritorious and great a statesman, is at all times a public calamity. At the present period of commotion, perplexity and misguided zeal, the loss of the wisest counsellors and the most faithful patriots calls for the deepest lamentation.

On Monday his remains were carried to his seat at Lyme, and on Tuesday they were interred with every mark of respect. And the grief manifested by his friends, neighbors and fellow citizens on that solemn occasion, furnished the highest evidence that he was beloved in the several relations of private life, and universally respected as a Magistrate. Lieut. Governor Smith, and

the Legislature, who were then in Session, immediately took such measures as were expedient to demonstrate their regard for his memory and exalted worth.

He was a son of the late Governor Mathew Griswold, and a native of Lyme. He graduated at Yale College, 1780.

At Fayetteville, (N. C.) on the 7th ult. the Rev. DAVID WILLEY.

At Dedham, (Mass.) on the 19th ult. the Rev. THOMAS THATCHER, A. A. S. pastor of the third church in that place, aged 56. Harvard, 1775.

At New-York, BENJAMIN LEDYARD, Esq. one of the masters in

Chancery for the State of New-York, aged 32.

Slain in the battle of Queenston (U. C.) on the 13th ult. General ISAAC BROCK, aged 53. Commander in chief of his Majesty's forces in the Canadas.

At Gloucester, (R. I.) the Hon. DANIEL OWEN, aged 81. formerly Lieut. Governor of Rhode-Island.

At Providence (R. I.) Dr. EPHRAIM BOWEN, a native of Rehoboth, (Mass.) aged 97. Dr. Bowen has sustained the character of an eminent and skillful physician, and a worthy and honest man.

At Lebanon, (Mass.) Rev. ISAAC HALSEY, aged 71. Harv. 1762.

*Donations to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.*

1812.

Oct. 7. From the Rev. Thomas Barr, collected in New settlements, - - - - -	\$ 23 26
8. From the Rev. James Parker, do. do. do.	8 27
22. From a Female Friend of Missions at Tor- ington, - - - - -	0 50
Nov. 30. From Rev. John Spencer, collected in New settlements, - - - - -	1 62
	<hr/>
	\$ 33 65
	<hr/>